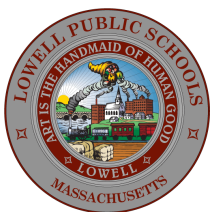


LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Teaching & Learning
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TO: Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent of Schools

FROM: Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer *R. Desmond*

DATE: June 6, 2023

RE: *Student Resource Center*

Attached please find the Student Resource Center plan for supporting students with the \$1,250,000 allocated in the FY24 budget.



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Lauren Sumiko Campion, Ed.D
Director of Student Resource Center

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MEMORANDUM

To: Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer
From: Lauren Campion, Director of Student Resource Center
Date: May 10th 2023
Re: Student Resource Center

Over the past two school years, a significant number of students have dropped out of Lowell Public Schools with no known high school equivalency plan. In response to this heightened need for flexible pathways and student re-engagement efforts, Lowell Public Schools proposed a new Student Resource Center that began operation in November 2023 upon hiring a Director and two part time Graduation Mentors. Since then, The Student Resource center has re-engaged 55 students who had dropped out in diploma or equivalency programs, and supports an additional caseload of 170 referred students who are at high-risk due to their attendance and course grades. These efforts are toward the goal of ensuring equitable, flexible pathways for students to remain in school and lower the dropout rate from a record high of 5.5% in SY21-22.

The Center will support district and community goals of fostering academic and economic success for all students. Specifically, The Center aims to **improve aggregate and subgroup graduation outcomes through school-based student engagement programs, personalized pathway case management, and collaborative referral practices**. Areas of focus include:

- Meet with families of new or disengaged students to identify educational options that meet personal goals and circumstance
- Where mutually deemed appropriate, support transition back to an LPS school with internal supports or warm handoff to external partners including non-diploma programs
- Develop internal systems for transitional re-engagement including flexible or competency based credit recovery, integrated student supports , and institutional agents mentoring
- Chair Dropout Prevention Taskforce which has produced recommendations for new programing and policy to support equitable outcomes
- Collaborate with other LPS departments and community partners on development of new, responsive programs and systems in support of students with historically disproportionate graduation outcomes including Hispanic/Latinx and newcomer students.

This work aligns with ongoing district strategies including Portrait of a Graduate, Community Schools, and strengthening Mental Health and Social Emotional supports through mentoring and clinical partnership.

Attachment A
Student Engagement Budget Proposal

Budget

Item	Cost
Staff Salaries: Career Academy Career Academy Community Schools Manager, Guidance Counselor, Math Teacher (Attachment B) <i>Includes fringe benefits</i>	\$360,000
Staff Salaries: Adult Diploma or HiSET Prep - pilot partnership(s) for students who have dropped out to receive high school equivalency	\$150,000
Staff Salaries: Engagement Center expansion at LHS Part Time Evening and Remote Competency Based Program Full Time Social Worker Part-Time Tutors (4)	\$140,000
Stipends: For middle, high school staff teams to implement best practice student engagement interventions. \$5000 per school (Attachment C)	\$140,000
Contractual: To-be-determined community partner(s) to engage students in flexible pathways to diploma or equivalency credential, with a focus on immigrant and refugee population ages 16-22.	\$235,000
Technology: 3 Desktop computers, 150 Apex licenses for LHS transitional credit recovery	\$45,000
Facilities: Space renovations to create Calming Room spaces at middle and high schools to support students who need breaks from class. (staffed)	\$150,000
Supplies: Marketing and communications supplies e.g. brochures, advertisements, magnetic alternative options visual and credit roadmaps, School- based supplies for teams implementing best practice student engagement interventions, calming room	\$30,000
Total Cost	\$1,250,000

Existing Student Resource Center staff:

School communication, outreach, and case management:

*Director of Student Resource Center, District Support Specialist - Student Resource Center Part
time graduation mentors (4)*

Attachment B

Additional Staffing at the Career Academy

Community Schools Manager: *Serving both the Career Academy and Engagement Center*

During the first six years of the Community School initiative, the school employed a full time Community Schools Manager position to connect students with partner agency wrap-around supports, the school saw its graduating class size grow from 2 to 15 students annually. This was in addition to the 40-60 seniors who graduated through the Career Academy's hybrid program, the Engagement Center, which was also under the direction of the Community Schools Manager. Moreover, a 2021 study by UMass Lowell's Center for Program Evaluation showed that students' involvement in the Career Academy's community school programming had a significant positive effect on their credit attainment.

Guidance Counselor: *Serving both the Career Academy and Engagement Center*

An on-site guidance counselor, who is familiar with the Career Academy's graduation requirements, unique scheduling needs and population, would be a valuable asset to the school. A guidance counselor would ensure that a student is taking all of their required courses in an appropriate sequence, ensuring a successful road to graduation. Guidance counselors provide personalized guidance tailored to individual students, helping them explore interests, set goals, and make informed decisions, especially regarding post high-school options. Additionally, guidance counselors offer academic support by assisting with course selection, study schedules, and connecting students to resources for improved academic performance.

Mathematics Teacher: The Career Academy is currently staffed with one math teacher who teaches the required Algebra and Geometry courses. Assessments have demonstrated that when students are entering the 9th grade at the Career Academy a majority of them require foundational math skills that would be taught in a pre-algebra curriculum. Adding an additional mathematics teacher would allow the Career Academy to expand from a two-year math program to a four-year math program. MCAS data supports that additional math classes are necessary to prepare students for success and allows the Career Academy to offer four years of math. This addition would provide the flexibility and opportunity to provide additional interventions and support and offer courses to meet students' needs leading to greater success.

Attachment C

Best Practice Student Engagement Intervention Schools may apply for mini-grants from the Student Resource Center

School teams can apply for funding for staff time outside of contractual day, supplies, and community partners to support Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to improve student engagement and connection to school.

State-recommended practices include: **Adult Advocates for Student Support** (e.g. mentoring, Check and Connect), **real-world/contextual learning**, **effective community school partnerships**, or **programs specifically designed to support transient students**.

Pilots must be short-term with measurable outcomes shared with the Student Resource Center.

Examples of SY22-23 school-based interventions

- Check and Connect - evidence based Tier II intervention to improve school connectedness. Staff and school-based community partners provide fifteen minutes, 4x weekly semi-structured mentoring “check-ins” for students in Tier II over the course of academic quarter. Outcomes include improvements in ABCs (attendance, behavior, course performance) and school connectedness. School: Butler, Bartlett, Career Academy. Partners: Elevate New England, Project LEARN
- Therapeutic intervention with horses at Ironstone Farms. School: LeBlanc
- End-of-quarter breakfasts with career speakers for students who significantly improved attendance. School: LHS Freshman Academy. Partner: Project LEARN
- After school acceleration academy for 8 weeks. School: Sullivan